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To: District and County Superintendents  
Attention: Directors of Testing  
Directors of Curriculum  
Directors of Special Education  
Bilingual Coordinators

From: Standards and Assessment Division  
California Department of Education

Subject: **Update on Standards and Assessment**

During April and May, California schools will administer the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program including the Stanford 9 and STAR augmentation, the SABE/2, and STAR augmented English language arts and mathematics field-tests; Golden State Examinations; Assessments in Career Education (ACE); field testing for the High School Exit Exam (HSEE); and physical fitness testing. A brief summary of key issues related to some of these programs follows.

## **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program**

### **STAR 2000**

#### **STAR Test Administration Issues**

Districts that tested during March and early April may already have submitted test materials for scoring. Districts that are currently testing or that will be testing between now and the end of the testing window are reminded that the submission of complete and accurate demographic information (all answer documents correctly gridded and/or pre-IDed) is the highest priority. Please note the following instructions and reminders.

1. There are **NO defaults** for any STAR demographic data. Every field must be completed for every student either by pre-identifying or hand coding the answer documents. For example, a student who does NOT receive special education services must be coded "Not Special Education and No Section 504 plan." Leaving the section blank--not coding anything--will result in an edit "failure" during test document processing. Districts with "edit failures" that exceed state criteria will be notified by the publisher and will have to complete the missing fields before processing can continue. Districts are reminded that any fields not completed through pre-identification as well as student answer documents that were not pre-IDed must be hand coded. Districts should consult the pre-ID directions to determine which fields, if any, must be hand coded. It is imperative, both for timely district results and reports, and for the entire processing of state results, that districts check every answer document and ensure that every field is coded. Districts will need to check all answer documents for students whose answer documents were not "pre-IDed" (pre-coded), and all fields that the district

superintendent certified would be hand coded at the time of testing. See below for specific instructions for students with IEPs or 504 plans.

2. **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE** in returning testing materials for scoring. All districts, but especially districts completing testing near the end of the testing window (May 15) will need to enlist whatever assistance may be necessary to collect, check, count, assemble, pack, and ship testing documents for scoring as quickly as possible. Districts whose testing materials are not received by the publisher by June 1 risk late return of district reports, inaccurate disaggregated Internet reports, and incorrect API calculations. Districts returning materials near the June 1 date are reminded that the superintendent or his/her designated district STAR coordinator must be available to respond to publisher requests for additional information until after STAR reports have been received and verified within the district.

### **Specific Instructions**

Districts have had questions about virtually every field on the answer documents. Specific fields that appear to have generated the most questions include: mobility; Asian ethnicity; parent education; students with disabilities/receiving special education services.

*Mobility:* Districts are required to provide, for each student tested, the grade from which the student has been continuously enrolled in the school, and in the school district. Note that the requirement for continuous enrollment is intended to accommodate districts with significant percentages of students who enter, leave, and re-enter the school and district. Continuous enrollment means the grade in which the student last entered or re-entered the school and district.

*Asian/Pacific Islander ethnicity:* The requirement to collect this information for students for whom "Asian" or "Pacific Islander" is the ethnic designation is found in CA Government Code Section 8310.5.

*Parent Education:* Information from this field is used in calculating the similar schools Academic Performance Index. Districts are required to complete this field for every student tested. If the district does not know the information, or if a parent makes a specific request for the information not to be included, the field should be coded "Declined to state or unknown." There is no default for this or any other field; blanks that exceed pre-set criteria will result in an edit failure.

*Students with Disabilities (Special Education Students):* There are three (3) separate categories of coding for students receiving special education services. Districts must pay attention to the sequence in completing these fields, or edit failures may occur. The categories and sequence are as follows:

- **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY:** Something must be coded in this section for every student tested. For the vast majority of students who do not receive any special education services (do not have an Individual Education Plan [IEP]) and do not have a Section 504 plan,) "Not Special Education and no Section 504 plan" **must be coded**. Once "Not Special Education and no Section 504 plan" is coded, no

*additional Special Education coding should be done.* Both of the following sections must be coded for students who **are** in one or more of the categories of Special Education Service Delivery.

- COMPLETE FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (and only for those students): Grid only one response among the 13 choices. For students with more than one disability, code "Multiple Disabilities." Students with Section 504 plans DO NOT have a disability category and this section should be left blank for them.
- TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS, TEST ADAPTATIONS, AND OUT OF LEVEL TESTING must be completed for every student coded as receiving one or more of the Special Education Service Deliveries. Students receiving special education services who take the test without any accommodations or adaptations should be coded "No Modification Used" in "All Content Areas." *Do not code* this section for *students not receiving any special education services* (Not Special Education and no Section 504). For all students who are receiving special education services, code each modification or adaptation that is used, by subject area. Students with Section 504 plans should have this section coded only if they were allowed and used "Testing Accommodations, etc.".

### **Other STAR Issues**

*Parent Exemptions:* Districts are reminded that Education Code section 60615 permits parents to request in writing that their student not participate in STAR testing. The district has no affirmative obligation to notify parents of Education Code section 60615. If the district does notify parents, the same notification must be provided to every parent. Districts are reminded that CCR Title 5, Section 852 prohibits schools, or employees, from soliciting or encouraging parent exemptions from testing. Parent/guardian requests to have their student(s) excused from all or part of the Stanford 9 or SABE/2 must be honored and the parent is not required to provide a rationale for the request. If an exemption request is received after testing has begun, the subtests that were completed before receiving the request must be submitted for scoring, and the parent/guardian should be told that score reports will be generated for the completed subtests.

*Test Preparation:* Education Code Section 60611 prohibits districts and schools and any employees of the district from using programs of specific preparation for any test or tests that are part of a statewide testing program.

*Testing Irregularities:* CDE has received reports of testing irregularities from several districts. Districts with suspected testing irregularities should contact CDE via phone and email at the time the suspected irregularity is detected for further instructions.

Districts have an obligation to take action when employees are in violation of statutory or regulatory provisions including, but not limited to, violations of test security, test preparation, other irregularities, or solicitation of exemption provisions of statute or regulation.

*STAR 2000 Apportionment Information Report:* The *STAR 2000 Apportionment Information Report* and Certification of Testing will be sent to districts by early May. Districts are required to complete and return the reports within five days of the completion of testing in the district. The Stanford 9 portion of the report will ask for the following information by grade: number of pupils enrolled on the first day of testing, number of pupils exempted by IEP, number of pupils exempted by parent request, number of pupils tested, and the number of tests administered with pre-identified answer documents. To meet requirements of the Public Schools Accountabilities Act (PSAA), the number of pupils enrolled on the first day of testing, the number of pupils exempted by IEP, and the number of pupils exempted by parent/guardian request will also be collected by school. The SABE/2 portion of the report will ask for the following information by grade: number of Spanish-speaking LEP pupils enrolled on the first day of testing, number of Spanish-speaking LEP pupils enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months prior to testing, number of Spanish-speaking LEP pupils enrolled less than 12 months exempted from testing by IEP, number of Spanish-speaking LEP pupils enrolled less than 12 months exempted from testing by parent request, total number of Spanish-speaking LEP pupils enrolled less than 12 months tested, total number of Spanish-speaking LEP pupils enrolled more than 12 months tested, and the number of SABE/2 tests administered with pre-identified answer documents.

### **Field Test Districts Still Needed**

Many thanks to the districts that participated in the field testing of STAR items/tests in science, history/social science, and/or writing prompts. Additional districts are needed for field tests of STAR English/language arts and mathematics scheduled for late May. Volunteer districts are especially needed for grades 9, 10, and 11. Any district willing to participate should contact the STAR service center immediately.

**STAR 1999.** Some districts have not yet paid Harcourt Educational Measurement (HEM) for costs incurred under the 1999 Standard Agreement. Districts that have filed the 1999 STAR Apportionment Information Report and have received the apportionment should pay HEM immediately. Districts that have not yet filed the Apportionment Report should contact the CDE for another copy and should complete and return the form as soon as possible. Similarly, districts that have been contacted about corrections needed for the Apportionment Report should provide the necessary corrections to CDE so that processing of the district's apportionment can go forward. Districts in any of the three categories above: invoice(s) not paid, Apportionment Report not returned, or Apportionment Report needing correction, will receive an additional letter from CDE reminding the district of its obligations under the Standard Agreement.

### **High School Exit Examination**

The American Institutes for Research (AIR), contractor for the HSEE, will be field testing items for the new test from May 15 through May 24 at selected schools throughout the state. The

HSEE will address the State Board of Education-adopted language arts content standards through grades 9 and 10, and the mathematics standards through grade 7 and algebra 1. As information becomes available, including assistance packets, policy decisions, and testing procedures, CDE will notify districts. A packet that includes a sample notification to parents and students as required in Education Code section 48980(e) is available on the Internet at [www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/hsee/infopack.html](http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/hsee/infopack.html). Additional information will be posted at this web site, as it becomes available. Districts are reminded that in order to prepare students to pass the exit examination, districts must provide courses, curriculum, and instruction that are aligned to SBE-adopted content standards, must ensure that all students are enrolled in those courses, and that students who do not make sufficient progress toward passing the exit examination as defined in Education Code section 37252 are provided summer school opportunities.

The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) is conducting the independent evaluation of the HSEE as required by Education Code section 60855. Schools and districts that receive requests for information, documents, data, interviews, or site visits from HumRRO should make every effort to cooperate.

#### **Physical Fitness Testing - 1999-2000**

As specified in Education Code Section 60800, districts with grades 5, 7, and/or 9 are required annually to assess all students for physical fitness during the months of March, April, or May. The *Fitnessgram* will continue as the required fitness test designated by the SBE. Districts may order test materials for *Fitnessgram* from Human Kinetics. Their toll-free number is (800) 747-4457. Materials are not available from the CDE.

Districts are reminded that CDE is required by statute to collect data on physical fitness once every two years. Since results were collected in 1998-99, CDE **will not** be collecting data on 1999-2000 assessment results. Statewide results will again be collected in 2000-01.

#### **Golden State Examinations**

The Golden State Examinations will be administered in most districts during May. Districts and schools with questions about the administration of the spring GSE should contact the Sacramento County Office of Education at (916) 228-2662.

For questions or further information about standards and assessment, contact the Standards and Assessment Division at (916) 657-3011 (phone); (916) 657-4964 (fax); [star@cde.ca.gov](mailto:star@cde.ca.gov) by e-mail; or visit our web site at [cde.ca.gov](http://cde.ca.gov) and click on Standards and Assessment. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.